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HIS LAST INAUGURAL ADDRESS, March 4, 1865.

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ORATION

*Pronounced in Union Square, April 25, 1865, at the
Funeral Obsequies of Abraham Lincoln
in the City of New York.*

BY GEORGE BANCROFT.

N

OUR grief and horror at the crime which has clothed the continent in mourning, find no adequate expression in words and no relief in tears. The President of the United States of America has fallen by the hands of an assassin. Neither the office with which he was invested by the approved choice of a mighty people, nor the most simple-hearted kindness of nature, could save him from the fiendish passions of relentless fanaticism. The wailings of the millions attend his remains as they are borne in solemn procession over our great rivers, along the seaside, beyond the mountains, across the prairie, to their resting place in the Valley of the Mississippi. His funeral knell vibrates through the world, and the friends of freedom of every tongue and in every clime are his mourners.

Too few days have passed away since Abra-

ham Lincoln stood in the flush of vigorous manhood, to permit any attempt at an analysis of his character or an exposition of his career. We find it hard to believe that his large eyes, which in their softness and beauty expressed nothing but benevolence and gentleness, are closed in death; we almost look for the pleasant smile that brought out more vividly the earnest cast of his features, which were serious even to sadness. A few years ago he was a village attorney, engaged in the support of a rising family, unknown to fame, scarcely named beyond his neighborhood; his administration made him the most conspicuous man in his country, and drew on him first the astonished gaze, and then the respect and admiration of the world.

Those who come after us will decide how much of the wonderful results of his public career is due to his own good common sense, his shrewd sagacity, readiness of wit, quick interpretation of the public mind, his rare combination of fixedness and pliancy, his steady tendency of purpose; how much to the American people, who, as he walked with them side by side, inspired him with their own wisdom and energy; and how much to the overruling laws of the moral world, by which the selfishness of evil is made to defeat itself. But after every allowance, it will remain that mem

bers of the Government which preceded his Administration opened the gates to treason, and he closed them; that when he went to Washington the ground on which he trod shook under his feet, and he left the republic on a solid foundation; that traitors had seized public forts and arsenals, and he recovered them for the United States, to whom they belonged; that the capital, which he found the abode of slaves, is now the home only of the free; that the boundless public domain, which was grasped at, and, in a great measure, held for the diffusion of slavery, is now irrevocably devoted to freedom; that then men talked a jargon of a balance of power in a republic between Slave States and Free States, and now the foolish words are blown away forever by the breath of Maryland, Missouri, and Tennessee; that a terrible cloud of political heresy rose from the abyss, threatening to hide the light of the sun, and under its darkness a rebellion was growing into indefinable proportions; now the atmosphere is purer than ever before, and the insurrection is vanishing away; the country is cast into another mould, and the gigantic system of wrong, which had been the work of more than two centuries, is dashed down, we hope forever. And as to himself personally: he was then scoffed at by the proud as unfit for his station, and now, against the

usage of later years and in spite of numerous competitors, he was the unbiassed and the undoubted choice of the American people for a second term of service. Through all the mad business of treason he retained the sweetness of a most placable disposition; and the slaughter of myriads of the best on the battle field and the more terrible destruction of our men in captivity by the slow torture of exposure and starvation, had never been able to provoke him into harboring one vengeful feeling or one purpose of cruelty.

How shall the nation most completely show its sorrow at Mr. Lincoln's death? How shall it best honor his memory? There can be but one answer. He was struck down when he was highest in its service, and in strict conformity with duty was engaged in carrying out principles affecting its life, its good name, and its relations to the cause of freedom and the progress of mankind. Grief must take the character of action, and breathe itself forth in the assertion of the policy to which he fell a victim. The standard which he held in his hand must be uplifted again higher and more firmly than before, and must be carried on to triumph. Above everything else, his proclamation of the first day of January, 1863, declaring throughout the parts of the country in

rebellion the freedom of all persons who had been held as slaves, must be affirmed and maintained.

Events, as they rolled onward, have removed every doubt of the legality and binding force of that proclamation. The country and the rebel government have each laid claim to the public service of the slave, and yet but one of the two can have a rightful claim to such service. That rightful claim belongs to the United States, because every one born on their soil, with the few exceptions of the children of travellers and transient residents, owes them a primary allegiance. Every one so born has been counted among those represented in Congress; every slave has ever been represented in Congress;—imperfectly and wrongly it may be—but still has been counted and represented. The slave born on our soil always owed allegiance to the General Government. It may in time past have been a qualified allegiance, manifested through his master, as the allegiance of a ward through its guardian or of an infant through its parent. But when the master became false to his allegiance the slave stood face to face with his country, and his allegiance, which may before have been a qualified one, became direct and immediate. His chains fell off, and he rose at once in the presence of the nation, bound, like the rest of us, to its defence.

Mr. Lincoln's proclamation did but take notice of the already existing right of the bondman to freedom. The treason of the master made it a public crime for the slave to continue his obedience; the treason of a State set free the collective bondmen of that State.

This doctrine is supported by the analogy of precedents. In the times of feudalism the treason of the lord of the manor deprived him of his serfs; the spurious feudalism that existed among us differs in many respects from the feudalism of the middle ages; but so far the precedent runs parallel with the present case; for treason the master then, for treason the master now, loses his slaves.

In the middle ages, the sovereign appointed another lord over the serfs and the land which they cultivated; in our day, the sovereign makes them masters of their own persons, lords over themselves.

It has been said that we are at war, and that emancipation is not a belligerent right. The objection disappears before analysis. In a war between independent powers, the invading foreigner invites to his standard all who will give him aid, whether bond or free, and he rewards them according to his ability and his pleasure with gifts or freedom; but when at a peace he withdraws

from the invaded country, he must take his aiders and comforters with him; or if he leaves them behind, where he has no court to enforce his decrees, he can give them no security, unless it be by the stipulations of a treaty. In a civil war it is altogether different. There, when rebellion is crushed, the old government is restored, and its courts resume their jurisdiction. So it is with us; the United States have courts of their own, that must punish the guilt of treason and vindicate the freedom of persons whom the fact of rebellion has set free.

Nor may it be said, that because slavery existed in most of the States when the Union was formed, it cannot rightfully be interfered with now. A change has taken place, such as Madison foresaw, and for which he pointed out the remedy. The constitutions of States had been transformed before the plotters of treason carried them away into rebellion. When the Federal Constitution was framed, general emancipation was thought to be near; and everywhere the respective legislatures had authority, in the exercise of their ordinary functions, to do away with slavery; since that time the attempt has been made in what are called Slave States, to render the condition of slavery perpetual; and events have proved with the clearness of demonstration, that

a constitution which seeks to continue a caste of hereditary bondmen through endless generations is inconsistent with the existence of republican institutions.

So, then, the new President and the people of the United States must insist that the proclamation of freedom shall stand as a reality. And, moreover, the people must never cease to insist that the Constitution shall be so amended as utterly to prohibit slavery on any part of our soil for evermore.

Alas! that a State in our vicinity should withhold its assent to this last beneficent measure; its refusal was an encouragement to our enemies equal to the gain of a pitched battle; and delays the only hopeful method of pacification. The removal of the cause of the rebellion is not only demanded by justice; it is the policy of mercy, making room for a wider clemency; it is the part of order against a chaos of controversy; its success brings with it true reconciliation, a lasting peace, a continuous growth of confidence through an assimilation of the social condition. Here is the fitting expression of the mourning of to-day.

And let no lover of his country say that this warning is uncalled for. The cry is delusive that slavery is dead. Even now it is nerving itself for a fresh struggle for continuance. The last winds from the South waft to us the sad intelligence

that a man, who had surrounded himself with the glory of the most brilliant and most varied achievements, who but a week ago was counted with affectionate pride among the greatest benefactors of his country and the ablest generals of all time, has initiated the exercise of more than the whole power of the Executive, and under the name of peace has, perhaps unconsciously, revived slavery and given the hope of security and political power to traitors from the Chesapeake to the Rio Grande. Why could he not remember the dying advice of Washington, never to draw the sword but for self-defence or the rights of his country, and when drawn, never to sheathe it till its work should be accomplished? And yet from this ill-considered act, which the people with one united voice condemn, no great evil will follow save the shadow on his own fame, and that also we hope will pass away. The individual, even in the greatness of military glory, sinks into insignificance before the resistless movements of ideas in the history of man. No one can turn back or stay the march of Providence.

No sentiment of despair may mix with our sorrow. We owe it to the memory of the dead, we owe it to the cause of popular liberty throughout the world, that the sudden crime which has taken the life of the President of the United States shall not

produce the least impediment in the smooth course of public affairs. This great city, in the midst of unexampled emblems of deeply seated grief, has sustained itself with composure and magnanimity. It has nobly done its part in guarding against the derangement of business or the slightest shock to public credit. The enemies of the republic put it to the severest trial; but the voice of faction has not been heard; doubt and despondency have been unknown. In serene majesty the country rises in the beauty and strength and hope of youth, and proves to the world the quiet energy and the durability of institutions growing out of the reason and affections of the people.

Heaven has willed it that the United States shall live. The nations of the earth cannot spare them. All the worn-out aristocracies of Europe saw in the spurious feudalism of slaveholding their strongest outpost, and banded themselves together with the deadly enemies of our national life. If the Old World will discuss the respective advantages of oligarchy or equality; of the union of church and state, or the rightful freedom of religion; of land accessible to the many or of land monopolized by an ever-decreasing number of the few, the United States must live to control the decision by their quiet and unobtrusive example. It has often and truly been observed that the trust and

affection of the masses gather naturally round an individual; if the inquiry is made whether the man so trusted and beloved shall elicit from the reason of the people enduring institutions of their own, or shall sequester political power for a superintending dynasty, the United States must live to solve the problem. If a question is raised on the respective merits of Timoleon or Julius Cæsar, of Washington or Napoleon, the United States must be there to call to mind that there were twelve Cæsars, most of them the opprobrium of the human race, and to contrast with them the line of American Presidents.

The duty of the hour is incomplete, our mourning is insincere, if, while we express unwavering trust in the great principles that underlie our government, we do not also give our support to the man to whom the people have intrusted its administration.

Andrew Johnson is now, by the Constitution, the President of the United States, and he stands before the world as the most conspicuous representative of the industrial classes. Left an orphan at four years old, poverty and toil were his steps to honor. His youth was not passed in the halls of colleges; nevertheless he has received a thorough political education in statesmanship in the school of the people and by long experience of

public life. A village functionary ; member successively of each branch of the Tennessee Legislature, hearing with a thrill of joy the words, "The Union, it must be preserved ;" a representative in Congress for successive years ; Governor of the great State of Tennessee ; approved as its Governor by reëlection ; he was at the opening of the rebellion a Senator from that State in Congress. Then at the Capitol, when Senators, unrebuked by the Government, sent word by telegram to seize forts and arsenals, he alone from that Southern region told them what the Government did not dare to tell them, that they were traitors, and deserved the punishment of treason. Undismayed by a perpetual purpose of public enemies to take his life, bearing up against the still greater trial of the persecution of his wife and children, in due time he went back to his State, determined to restore it to the Union, or die with the American flag for his winding sheet. And now, at the call of the United States, he has returned to Washington as a conqueror, with Tennessee as a Free State for his trophy. It remains for him to consummate the vindication of the Union.

To that Union Abraham Lincoln has fallen a martyr. His death, which was meant to sever it beyond repair, binds it more closely and more firmly than ever. The blow aimed at him,

was aimed not at the native of Kentucky, not at the citizen of Illinois, but at the man who, as President, in the executive branch of the Government, stood as the representative of every man in the United States. The object of the crime was the life of the whole people; and it wounds the affections of the whole people. From Maine to the southwest boundary on the Pacific, it makes us one. The country may have needed an imperishable grief to touch its inmost feeling. The grave that receives the remains of Lincoln, receives the costly sacrifice to the Union; the monument which will rise over his body will bear witness to the Union; his enduring memory will assist during countless ages to bind the States together, and to incite to the love of our one undivided, indivisible country. Peace to the ashes of our departed friend, the friend of his country and his race. He was happy in his life, for he was the restorer of the republic; he was happy in his death, for his martyrdom will plead forever for the Union of the States and the freedom of man.

O D E

FOR THE FUNERAL OF ABRAHAM LINCOLN.

BY WILLIAM CULLEN BRYANT.

On, slow to smite and swift to spare,
Gentle and merciful and just !
Who, in the fear of God, did'st bear
The sword of power—a nation's trust,

In sorrow by thy bier I stand,
Amid the awe that hushes all,
And speak the anguish of a land
That shook with horror at thy fall.

Thy task is done—the bond are free ;
We bear thee to an honored grave,
Whose noblest monument shall be
The broken fetters of the slave.

Pure was thy life ; its bloody close
Hath placed thee with the sons of light,
Among the noble host of those
Who perished in the cause of right.

PRESIDENT LINCOLN'S
EMANCIPATION PROCLAMATION.

January 1st, 1863.

WHEREAS, On the twenty-second day of September, in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and sixty-two, a proclamation was issued by the President of the United States, containing, among other things, the following, to wit.

“That on the first day of January, in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and sixty-three, all persons held as slaves within any State, or designated part of a State, the people whereof shall then be in rebellion against the United States, shall be thenceforth and forever free, and the Executive Government of the United States, including the military and naval authorities thereof, will recognize and maintain the freedom of such persons, and will do no act or acts to

repress such persons, or any of them, in any effort they may make for their actual freedom.

“That the Executive will, on the first day of January aforesaid, by proclamation, designate the States, and parts of States, if any, in which the people therein respectively shall then be in rebellion against the United States, and the fact that any State, or the people thereof, shall on that day be in good faith represented in the Congress of the United States, by members chosen thereto at elections wherein a majority of the qualified voters of such States shall have participated, shall, in the absence of strong countervailing testimony, be deemed conclusive evidence that such State and the people thereof, are not then in rebellion against the United States.”

Now therefore, I, Abraham Lincoln, President of the United States, by virtue of the power in me vested as Commander-in-Chief of the army and navy of the United States in time of actual armed rebellion against the authority and government of the United States, and as a fit and necessary war measure for suppressing said rebellion, do, on this first day of January, in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and six-

ty-three, and in accordance with my purpose so to do publicly proclaimed for the full period of one hundred days from the day of the first above-mentioned order, designate as the States and parts of States wherein the people thereof respectively are this day in rebellion against the United States, the following, to wit: Arkansas, Texas, Louisiana, except the parishes of St. Bernard, Plaquemines, Jefferson, St. John, St. Charles, St. James, Ascension, Assumption, Terre Bonne, Lafourche, St. Mary, St. Martin, and Orleans, including the city of New Orleans, Mississippi, Alabama, Florida, Georgia, South Carolina, North Carolina, and Virginia, except the forty-eight counties designated as West Virginia, and also the counties of Berkley, Accomac, Northampton, Elizabeth City, York, Princess Ann, and Norfolk, including the cities of Norfolk and Portsmouth, and which excepted parts are for the present left precisely as if this proclamation were not issued.

And by virtue of the power and for the purpose aforesaid, I do order and declare that all persons held as slaves, within said designated States and parts of States, are, and henceforward shall be free, and that the Executive Government of the

United States, including the military and naval authorities thereof, will recognize and maintain the freedom of said persons.

And I hereby enjoin upon the people so declared to be free, to abstain from all violence unless in necessary self-defence, and I recommend to them, that in all cases, when allowed, they labor faithfully for reasonable wages.

And I further declare and make known that such persons of suitable condition, will be received into the armed service of the United States, to garrison forts, positions, stations, and other places, and to man vessels of all sorts in said service.

And upon this act, sincerely believed to be an act of justice, warranted by the Constitution, upon military necessity, I invoke the considerate judgment of mankind and the gracious favor of Almighty God.

In witness whereof I have hereunto set my hand and caused the seal of the United States to be affixed.

Done at the City of Washington, this
[L.S.] first day of January, in the year of
our Lord one thousand eight hundred

and sixty-three, and of the independence
of the United States of America the
eighty-seventh.

ABRAHAM LINCOLN.

By the President.

WM. H. SEWARD,
Secretary of State.

January 1, 1863.

PRESIDENT LINCOLN'S
SECOND INAUGURAL ADDRESS.

March 4th, 1865.

FELLOW COUNTRYMEN:—At this second appearing to take the oath of the Presidential office, there is less occasion for an extended address than there was at first. Then a statement of a course to be pursued seemed very fitting and proper.

Now, at the expiration of four years, during which public declarations have been constantly called forth on every point and phase of the great contest which still absorbs the attention and engrosses the energies of the nation, little that is new could be presented.

The progress of our arms, upon which all else chiefly depends, is as well known to the public as to myself, and it is, I trust, reasonably satisfactory and encouraging to all. With high hopes for the future, no prediction in regard to it is ventured.

On the occasion corresponding to this, four years ago, all thoughts were anxiously directed to an impending civil war. All dreaded it; all sought to avoid it.

While the Inaugural Address was being delivered from this place, devoted altogether to saving the Union without war, insurgent agents were in the city seeking to destroy it without war; seeking to dissolve the Union and divide the effects by negotiation. Both parties deprecated war, but one of them would make war rather than let the nation survive, and the other would accept war rather than let it perish; and the war came.

One eighth of the whole population were colored slaves, not distributed generally over the Union, but localized in the Southern part of it.

These slaves constituted a peculiar and powerful interest. All knew that this interest was somehow the cause of the war. To strengthen, perpetuate, and extend this interest was the object for which the insurgents would rend the Union by war, while the Government claimed no right to more than restrict the territorial enlargement of it.

Neither party expected for the war the magnitude or the duration which it has already attained. Neither anticipated that the cause of the conflict might cease with, or even before the conflict itself should cease. Each looked for an easier triumph, and a result less fundamental and astounding.

Both read the same Bible and pray to the same God, and each invokes His aid against the other. It may seem strange that any men should dare to ask a just God's assistance in wringing their bread from the sweat of other men's faces; but let us judge not, that we may not be judged. The prayer of both could not be answered. That of neither has been answered fully. The Almighty has His own purposes. "Woe unto the world because of offences, for it must needs be that offences come, but woe unto the man by whom the offence cometh." If we shall suppose that American slavery is one of these offences which, in the Providence of God, must needs come, but which having continued through his appointed time, he now wills to remove, and that he gives to both North and South this terrible war as the woe due to those by whom the offence came, shall

we discern therein any departure from those divine attributes which the believers in a living God always ascribe to Him?

Fondly do we hope, fervently do we pray, that this mighty scourge of war may speedily pass away. Yet, if God wills that it continue until all the wealth piled by the bondman's two hundred and fifty years of unrequited toil shall be sunk, and until every drop of blood drawn with the lash shall be paid by another drawn with the sword, as was said three thousand years ago, so still it must be said, the judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether.

With malice toward no one, with charity for all, with firmness in the right as God gives us to see the right, let us strive on to finish the work we are in, to bind up the nation's wounds, to care for him who shall have borne the battle, and for his widow and his orphans, to do all which may achieve and cherish a just and lasting peace among ourselves and with all nations.

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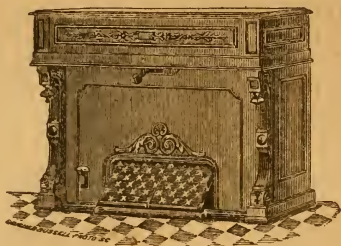
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